

**VERTIGO**



Aug 08

suggested for  
mature readers  
[vervigocomics.com](http://vervigocomics.com)



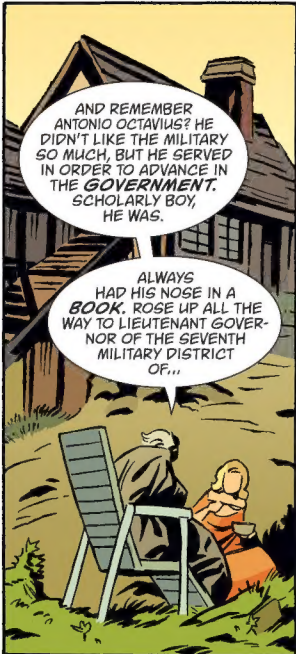
NO. **74**

WILLINGHAM BUCKINGHAM LEIALOHA  
**WAR & PIECES**  
PART TWO OF THREE

**G** EPPETTO'S RESTORED COTTAGE IN THE HILLS ABOVE THE IMPERIAL CITY.

FATHER, WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO TRY SOME LUNCH TODAY? JUST A BITE OR TWO?

NOW RODRIGO, HE WAS SUCH A BRASH ONE. ALWAYS FIGHTING. NO MORE FIGHTING FOR HIM. DEAD NOW, ALONG WITH THE REST.



AND REMEMBER ANTONIO OCTAVIUS? HE DIDN'T LIKE THE MILITARY SO MUCH, BUT HE SERVED IN ORDER TO ADVANCE IN THE GOVERNMENT. SCHOLARLY BOY, HE WAS.

ALWAYS HAD HIS NOSE IN A BOOK. ROSE UP ALL THE WAY TO LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THE SEVENTH MILITARY DISTRICT OF...



WAS IT KARSE OR KURREWYN? I FORGET. ONE OF THE K WORLDS ANYWAY.

GONE NOW, ALONG WITH THE OTHERS.

PLEASE, FATHER. TRY JUST ONE SIP.



I PULLED THEM ALL AWAY FROM THEIR LIVES AND CAREERS, AND SENT THEM TO DIE IN THAT BLIGHTED ALIEN LAND.

MY GOLDEN HORDE TURNED OUT TO BE BLACK INSTEAD. BLACK AS DEATH.

# A VERY ONE-SIDED WAR

Chapter Two of

## WAR AND PIECES

Bill Willingham writer/creator  
Mark Buckingham penciller

Steve Leialoha, Andrew Pepoy inkers

Lee Loughridge colors

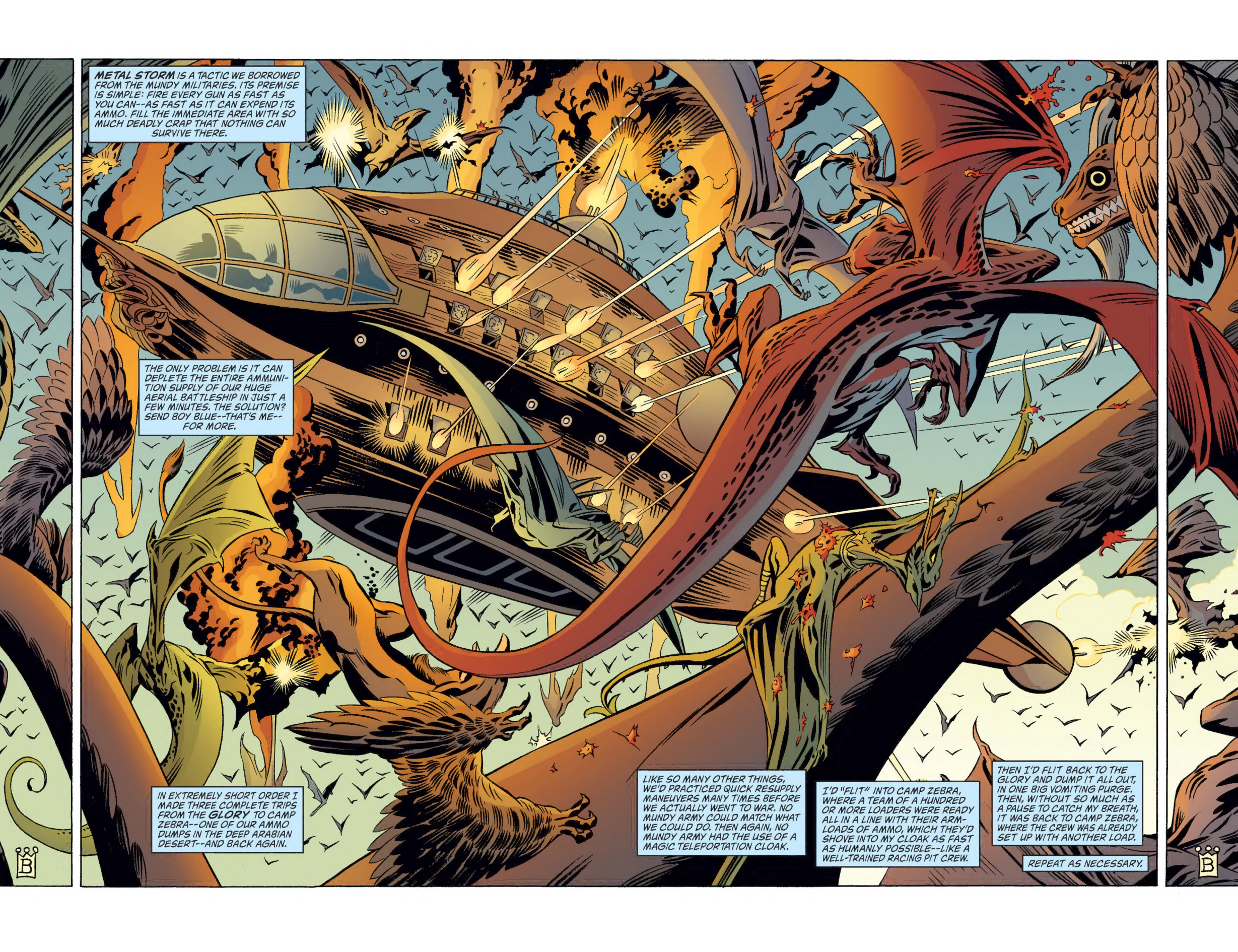
Todd Klein letters

James Jean cover

Angela Rufino asst. ed.

Shelly Bond editor





METAL STORM IS A TACTIC WE BORROWED FROM THE MUNDY MILITARIES. ITS PREMISE IS SIMPLE: FIRE EVERY GUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN--AS FAST AS IT CAN EXPEND ITS AMMO. FILL THE IMMEDIATE AREA WITH SO MUCH DEADLY CRAP THAT NOTHING CAN SURVIVE THERE.

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS IT CAN DEplete THE ENTIRE AMMUNITION SUPPLY OF OUR HUGE AERIAL BATTLESHIP IN JUST A FEW MINUTES. THE SOLUTION? SEND BOY BLUE--THAT'S ME--FOR MORE.

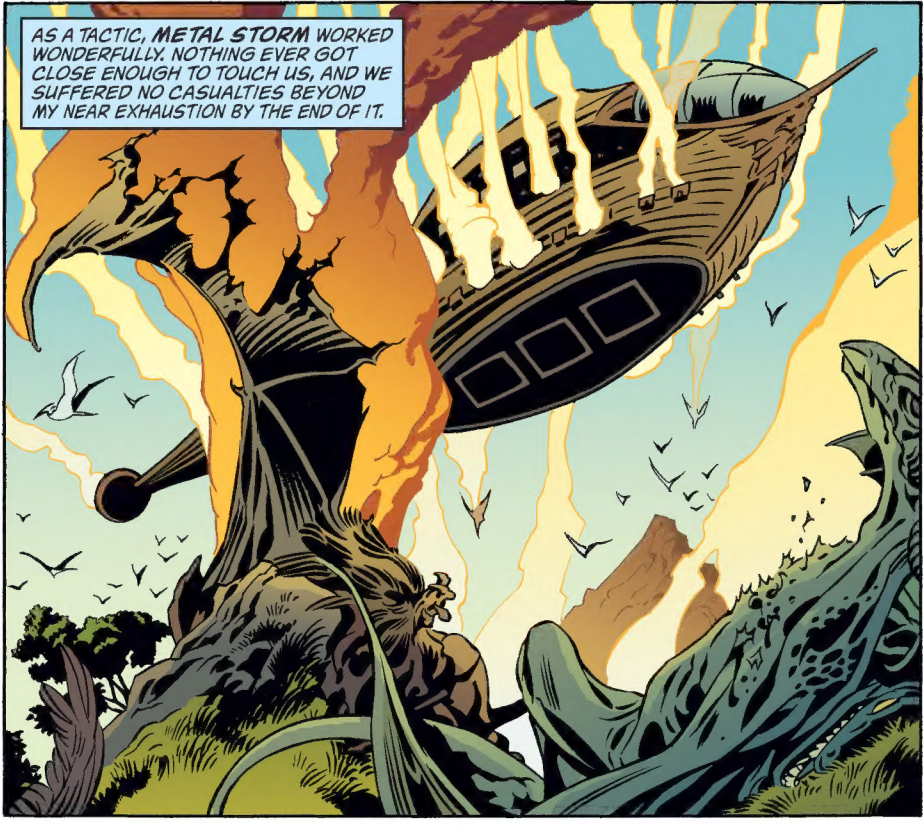
IN EXTREMELY SHORT ORDER I MADE THREE COMPLETE TRIPS FROM THE GLORY TO CAMP ZEBRA--ONE OF OUR AMMO DUMPS IN THE DEEP ARABIAN DESERT--AND BACK AGAIN.

LIKE SO MANY OTHER THINGS, WE'D PRACTICED QUICK RESUPPLY MANEUVERS MANY TIMES BEFORE WE ACTUALLY WENT TO WAR. NO MUNDY ARMY COULD MATCH WHAT WE COULD DO. THEN AGAIN, NO MUNDY ARMY HAD THE USE OF A MAGIC TELEPORTATION CLOAK.


I'D "FLIT" INTO CAMP ZEBRA, WHERE A TEAM OF A HUNDRED OR MORE LOADERS WERE READY ALL IN A LINE WITH THEIR ARMLOADS OF AMMO, WHICH THEY'D SHOVE INTO MY CLOAK AS FAST AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE--LIKE A WELL-TRAINED RACING PIT CREW.

THEN I'D FLIT BACK TO THE GLORY AND DUMP IT ALL OUT, IN ONE BIG VOMITING PURGE. THEN, WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A PAUSE TO CATCH MY BREATH, IT WAS BACK TO CAMP ZEBRA, WHERE THE CREW WAS ALREADY SET UP WITH ANOTHER LOAD.

REPEAT AS NECESSARY.



AS A TACTIC, METAL STORM WORKED WONDERFULLY. NOTHING EVER GOT CLOSE ENOUGH TO TOUCH US, AND WE SUFFERED NO CASUALTIES BEYOND MY NEAR EXHAUSTION BY THE END OF IT.



BEHOLD! IT IS EVEN AS THE WESTERN FABLES PROMISED! **NOTHING** CAN HARM US IN OUR SHIP OF WONDERS!

WE COULD CONQUER **WORLDS** WITH A FLEET OF SUCH VESSELS!

CONGRATULATIONS, PRINCE CHARMING! YOUR GUN CREWS WORKED **MIRACLES** HERE TODAY!

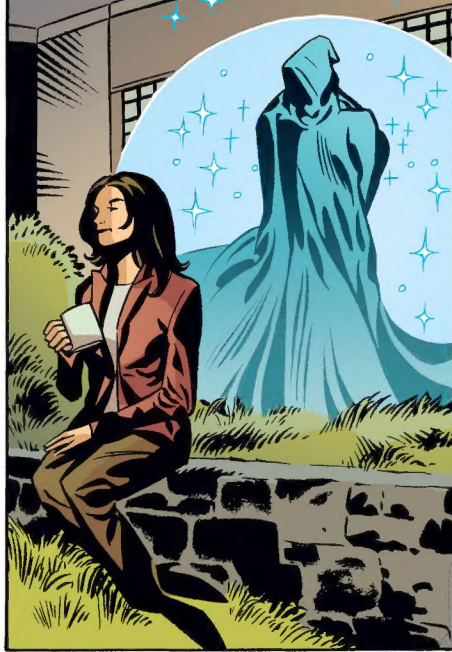
AND TO YOU TOO, CAPTAIN SINBAD. WITHOUT YOUR FLYING SHIP, SO DEFTLY AND EXPERTLY MANNED, MY VAUNTED GUNS WOULD BE GROUNDLED AND **USELESS**.

AFTER THAT BATTLE NO OTHER MASS ATTACKS WERE ATTEMPTED AGAINST THE GLORY OF BAGHDAD.

THE SHIP WENT ON TO COMPLETE ITS NEXT FOUR BOMBING MISSIONS WITHOUT A HITCH, WHILE I WENT BACK TO MY BUSY ROUTINE.



EACH DAY I SHUTTLED BETWEEN OUR THREE FRONTS IN THE WAR. THE GLORY, BRIAR ROSE'S HIDEOUT WITHIN THE IMPERIAL CITY, AND BIGBY'S COMBAT TEAM AT OUR EMERGENCY EXTRACTION BEANSTALK.



AND EACH DAY I VISITED OUR THREE HOME FRONT STATIONS: BAGHDAD, FABLETOWN, AND THE FARM--SPECIFICALLY OUR MAIN WAR PLANNING CENTER AT WOLF MANOR.

OH GOOD, BLUE, YOU'RE HERE. COME UPSTAIRS, WON'T YOU?



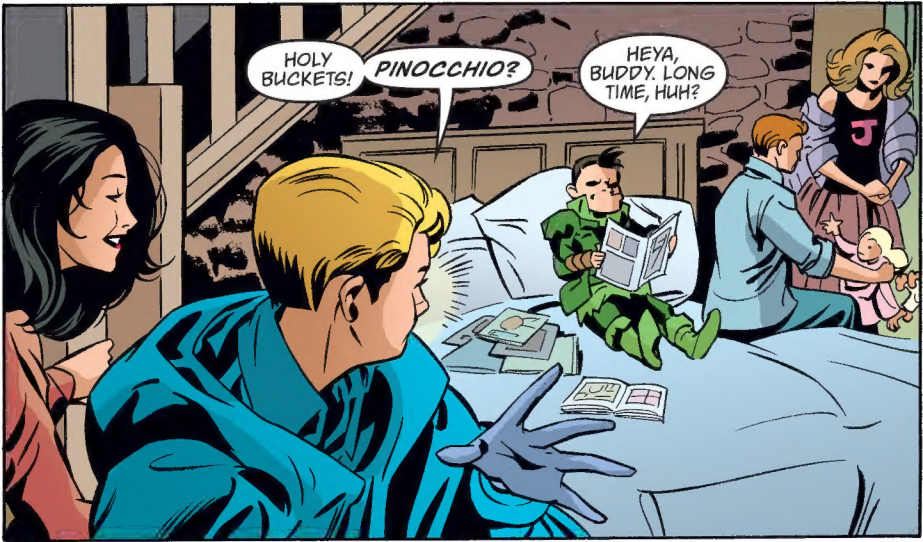
AND WHEN I COULD SQUEEZE IN A SPARE MOMENT, I TRANSPORTED FARM FABLES TO FLYCATCHER'S NEW KINGDOM OF HAVEN.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO THE WAR PLANNING ROOM, SNOW?

IN A BIT, BUT FIRST IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO SEE WHAT WE'VE GOT STASHED IN OUR GUEST BEDROOM.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A SURPRISE.





HOLY BUCKETS!

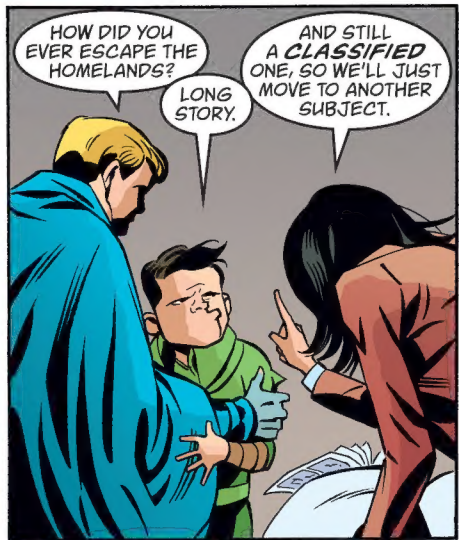
PINOCCHIO?

HEYA, BUDDY. LONG TIME, HUH?



IS IT REALLY YOU? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

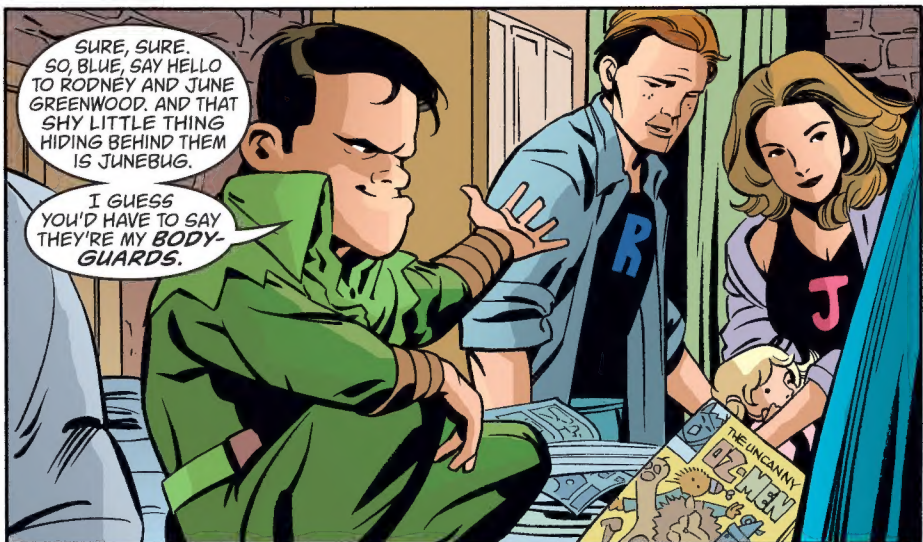
BELIEVE IT. BELIEVE IT. BUT ALSO PUT ME DOWN WHILE I HAVE A RIB LEFT.



HOW DID YOU EVER ESCAPE THE HOMELANDS?

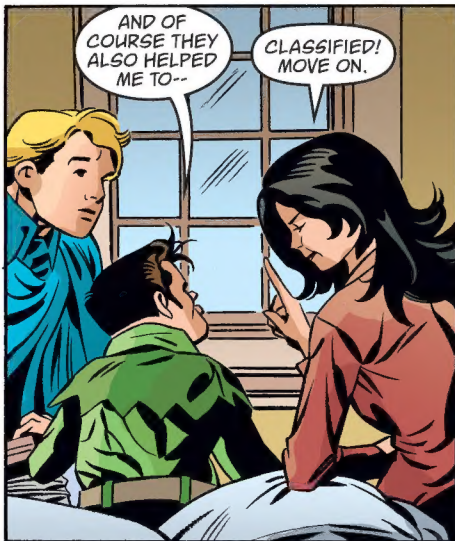
LONG STORY.

AND STILL A CLASSIFIED ONE, SO WE'LL JUST MOVE TO ANOTHER SUBJECT.



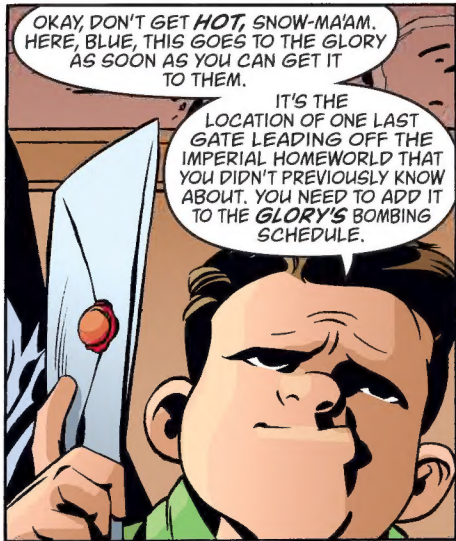
SURE, SURE. SO, BLUE, SAY HELLO TO RODNEY AND JUNE GREENWOOD. AND THAT SHY LITTLE THING HIDING BEHIND THEM IS JUNEBUG.

I GUESS YOU'D HAVE TO SAY THEY'RE MY BODY-GUARDS.



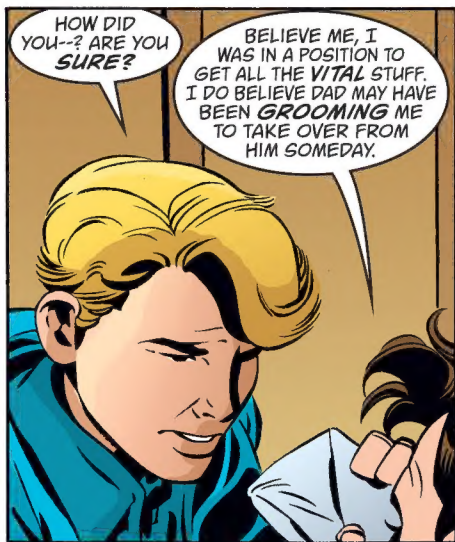
AND OF COURSE THEY ALSO HELPED ME TO--

CLASSIFIED! MOVE ON.



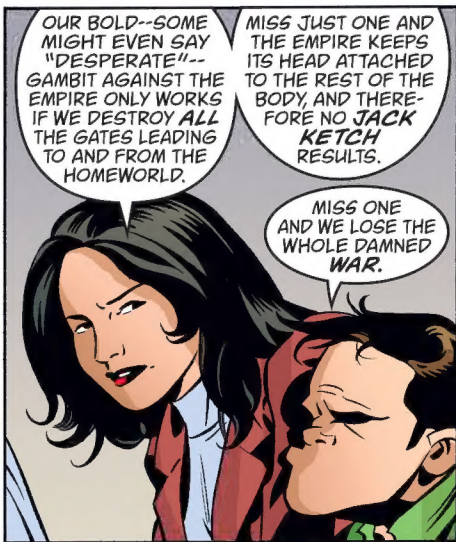
OKAY, DON'T GET **HOT**, SNOW-MA'AM. HERE, BLUE, THIS GOES TO THE GLORY AS SOON AS YOU CAN GET IT TO THEM.

IT'S THE LOCATION OF ONE LAST GATE LEADING OFF THE IMPERIAL HOMETORLD THAT YOU DIDN'T PREVIOUSLY KNOW ABOUT. YOU NEED TO ADD IT TO THE **GLORY'S** BOMBING SCHEDULE.



HOW DID YOU--? ARE YOU **SURE**?

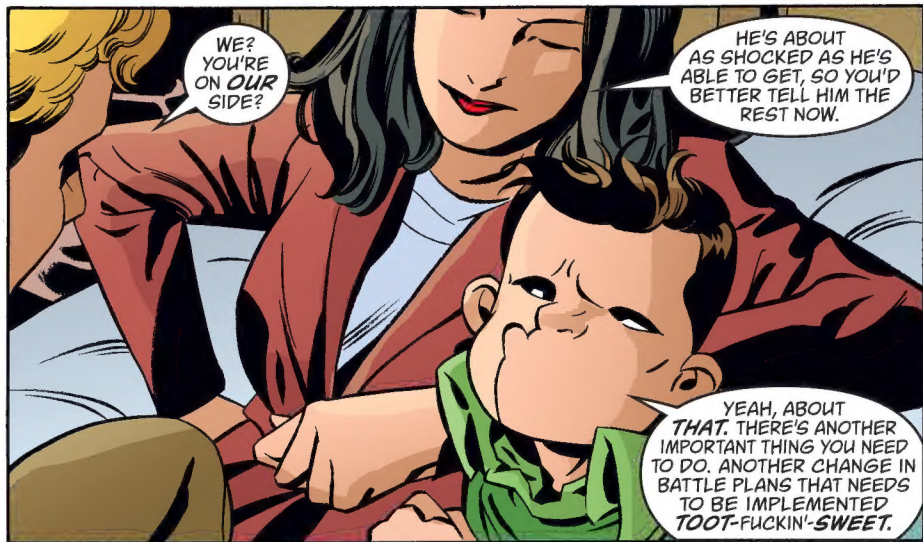
BELIEVE ME, I WAS IN A POSITION TO GET ALL THE **VITAL** STUFF. I DO BELIEVE DAD MAY HAVE BEEN **GROOMING** ME TO TAKE OVER FROM HIM SOMEDAY.



OUR BOLD--SOME MIGHT EVEN SAY "DESPERATE"--GAMBIT AGAINST THE EMPIRE ONLY WORKS IF WE DESTROY ALL THE GATES LEADING TO AND FROM THE HOMETORLD.

MISS JUST ONE AND THE EMPIRE KEEPS ITS HEAD ATTACHED TO THE REST OF THE BODY, AND THEREFORE NO **JACK KETCH** RESULTS.

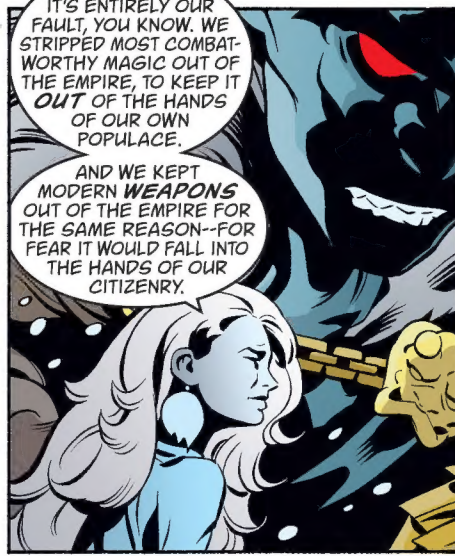
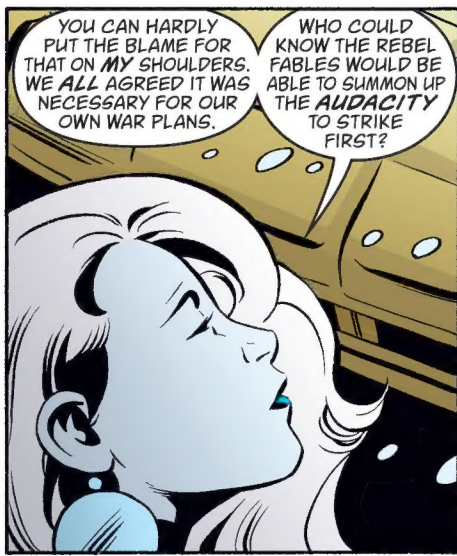
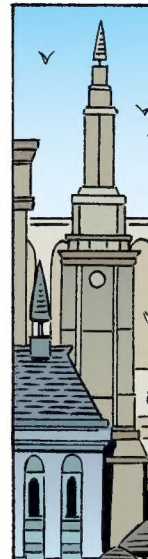
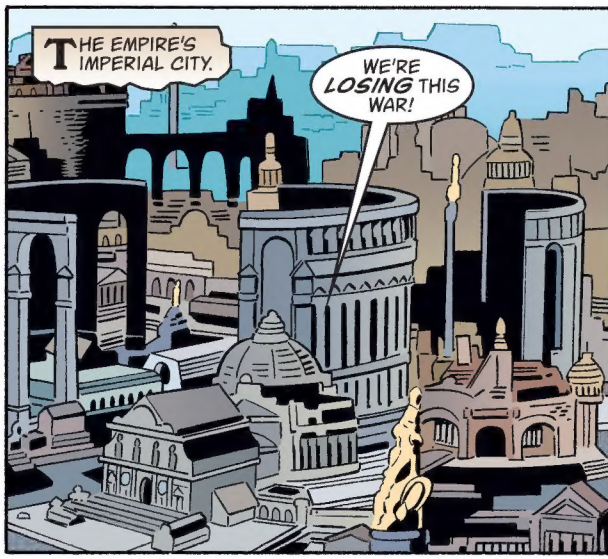
MISS ONE AND WE LOSE THE WHOLE DAMNED **WAR**.



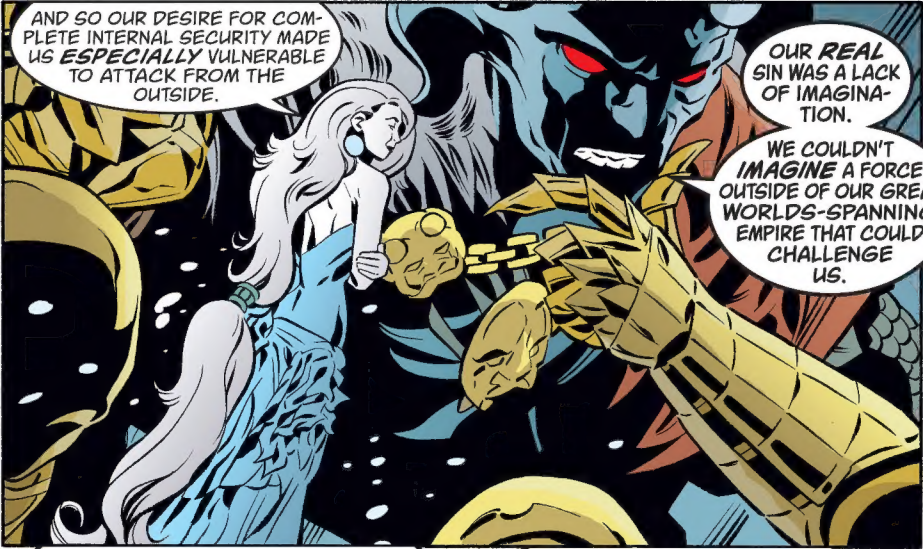
WE? YOU'RE ON **OUR** SIDE?

HE'S ABOUT AS SHOCKED AS HE'S ABLE TO GET, SO YOU'D BETTER TELL HIM THE REST NOW.

YEAH, ABOUT **THAT**. THERE'S ANOTHER IMPORTANT THING YOU NEED TO DO. ANOTHER CHANGE IN BATTLE PLANS THAT NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED **TOOT-FUCKIN'-SWEET**.







AND SO OUR DESIRE FOR COMPLETE INTERNAL SECURITY MADE US **ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE** TO ATTACK FROM THE OUTSIDE.

OUR **REAL SIN** WAS A LACK OF IMAGINATION.

WE COULDN'T **IMAGINE** A FORCE OUTSIDE OF OUR GREAT WORLDS-SPANNING EMPIRE THAT COULD CHALLENGE US.

AND WE COULDN'T IMAGINE A MILITARY THREAT THAT WASN'T BASED ON **MAGIC**. WE IGNORED THE MUNDY WORLD BECAUSE IT WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY **DEVOID OF MAGIC**.

FOR CENTURIES WE LAUGHED AT THE REBEL FABLES WHO WERE TRAPPED IN THAT PLACE, THINKING THEY'D ALREADY CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TO A PRISON FAR WORSE THAN ANY WE COULD DEVISE.

BUT NOW WE'VE LEARNED TOO LATE THAT **MAGIC** ISN'T THE ONLY SOURCE OF EFFECTIVE MILITARY POWER. THE MUNDY WORLD GREW MIGHTY RIGHT UNDER OUR **NOSES**.

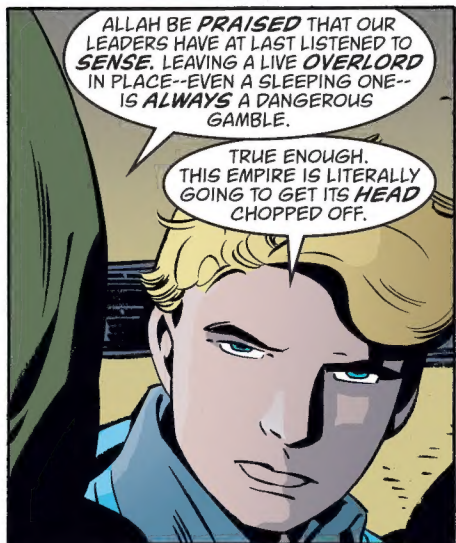
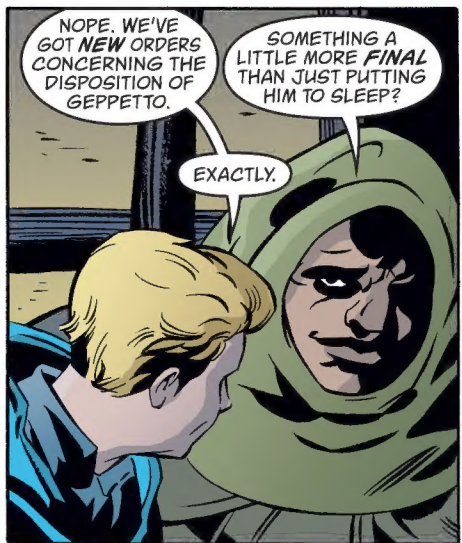
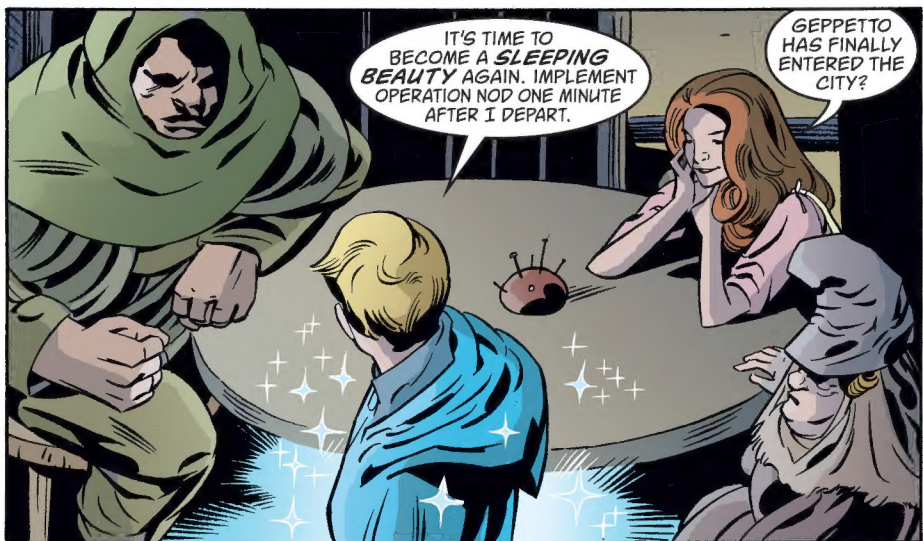
THESE **GUNS** OF THEIRS MAKE THE LOWLIEST IGNORANT PEASANT MORE DEADLY THAN OUR MOST POWERFUL COMBAT WARLOCK.

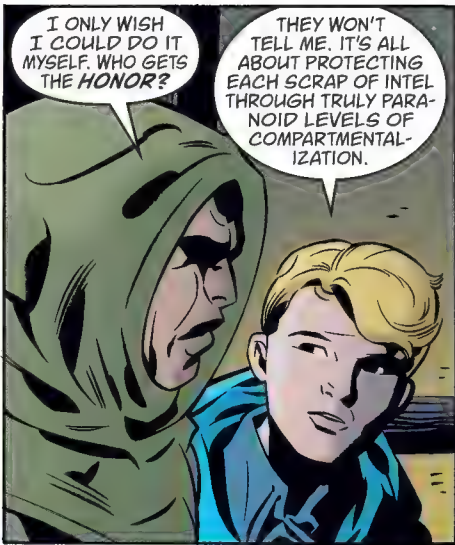
AND WHEREAS IT TAKES AT LEAST TWENTY YEARS TO TRAIN THE MOST **BASIC COMBAT SORCERER**, A PEASANT CAN LEARN THE RUDIMENTS OF FIRING A GUN IN A SINGLE DAY.

IN SHORT, WE'VE **LOST**. THE EMPIRE IS FINISHED. I MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO RETURN TO MY OWN WORLD, BEFORE THE LAST GATES OUT ARE DESTROYED.

NOT YET. WE HAVE ONE **LAST GAMBIT** TO TRY. I'VE SET A TRAP ON THE SKYSHIP'S ROUTE OF TRAVEL.

YOUR **LAST DRAGON**? THE ONE YOU HELD BACK FROM THE ATTACK?





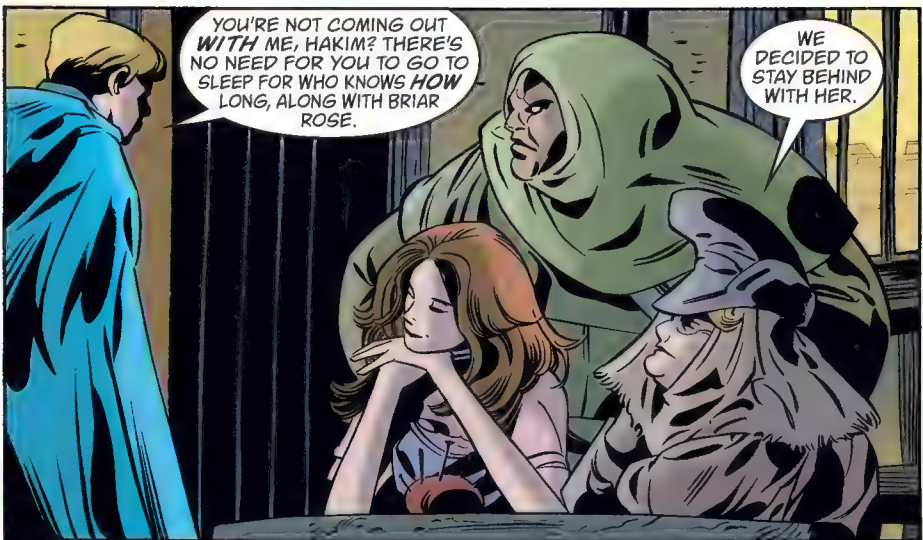
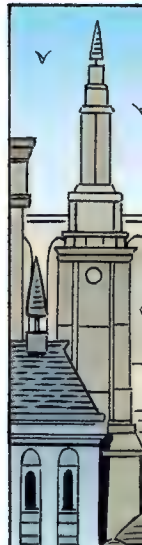
I ONLY WISH I COULD DO IT MYSELF. WHO GETS THE HONOR?

THEY WON'T TELL ME. IT'S ALL ABOUT PROTECTING EACH SCRAP OF INTEL THROUGH TRULY PARANOID LEVELS OF COMPARTMENTALIZATION.



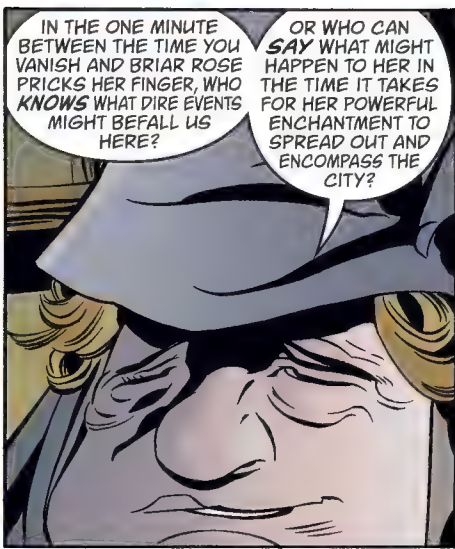
A TACTIC OF WHICH I APPROVE. WELL DONE.

I WILL GO TO SLEEP WITH GREATER COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE IN THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF OUR GOOD WAR.



YOU'RE NOT COMING OUT WITH ME, HAKIM? THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO GO TO SLEEP FOR WHO KNOWS HOW LONG, ALONG WITH BRIAR ROSE.

WE DECIDED TO STAY BEHIND WITH HER.



IN THE ONE MINUTE BETWEEN THE TIME YOU VANISH AND BRIAR ROSE PRICKS HER FINGER, WHO KNOWS WHAT DIRE EVENTS MIGHT BEFALL US HERE?

OR WHO CAN SAY WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO HER IN THE TIME IT TAKES FOR HER POWERFUL ENCHANTMENT TO SPREAD OUT AND ENCOMPASS THE CITY?



SO WE'VE DECIDED TO STAY WITH THE MAIDEN, TO PROTECT HER WITH SWORD AND SPELL UNTIL WE CAN NO LONGER DO SO.

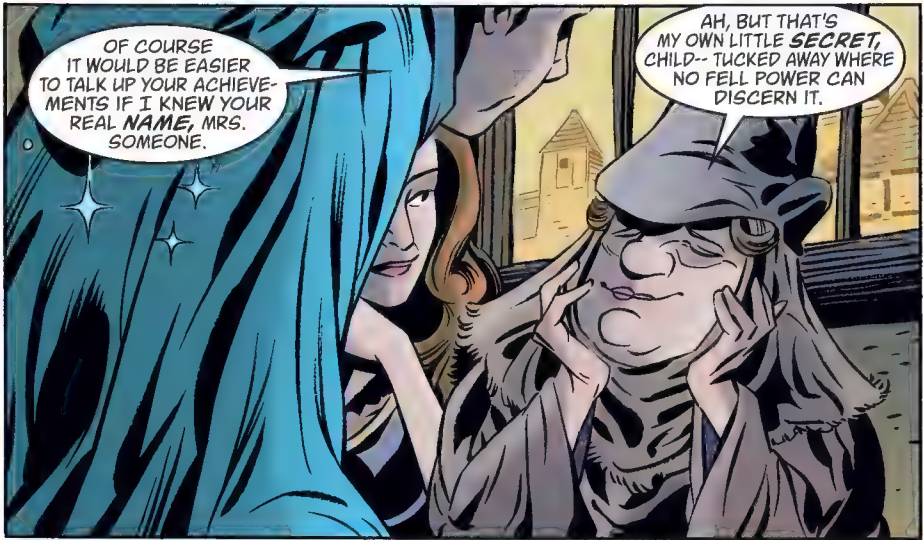
YES. SOME OF MY MANY PROTECTIONS IN AND AROUND THIS HOVEL WOULD DISAPPEAR THE INSTANT I DID. BETTER TO STAY HERE AND BE SURE.





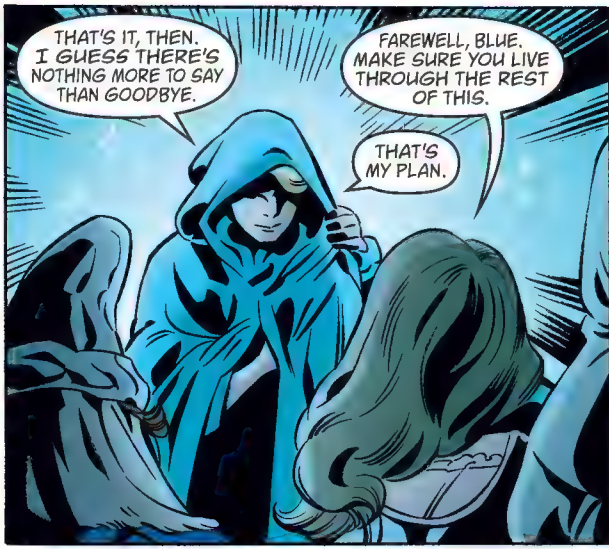
WELL, I ADMIRE YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE, AND I'LL MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS THE FULL EXTENT OF THE SACRIFICE YOU THREE ARE MAKING HERE TODAY.

AT LEAST I WILL WHEN I'M FREE TO TALK ABOUT IT.



OF COURSE IT WOULD BE EASIER TO TALK UP YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS IF I KNEW YOUR REAL NAME, MRS. SOMEONE.

AH, BUT THAT'S MY OWN LITTLE SECRET, CHILD-- TUCKED AWAY WHERE NO FELL POWER CAN DISCERN IT.



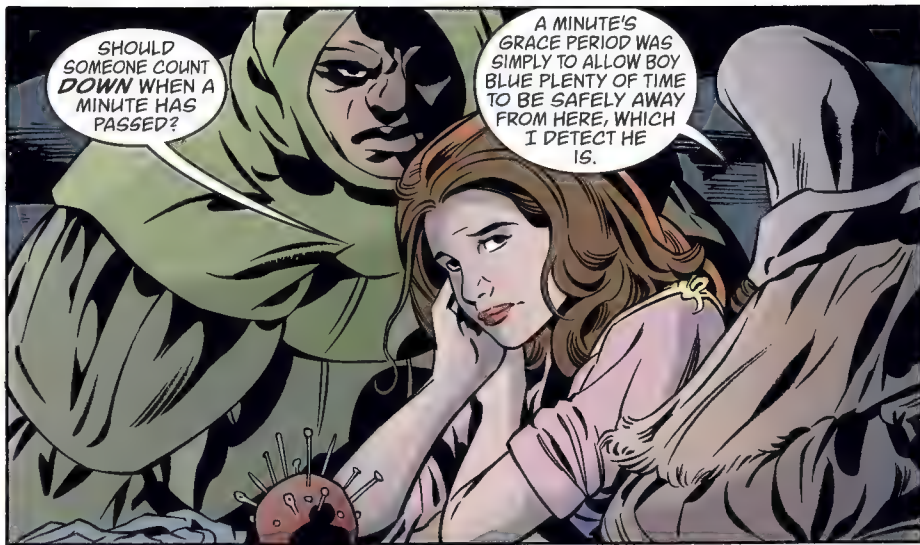
THAT'S IT, THEN. I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO SAY THAN GOODBYE.

FAREWELL, BLUE. MAKE SURE YOU LIVE THROUGH THE REST OF THIS.

THAT'S MY PLAN.

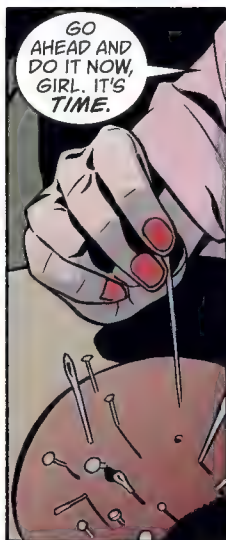
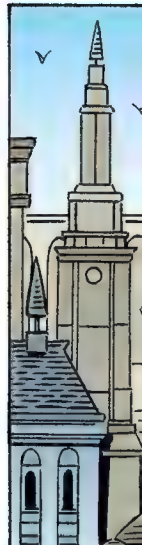


SWEET DREAMS.

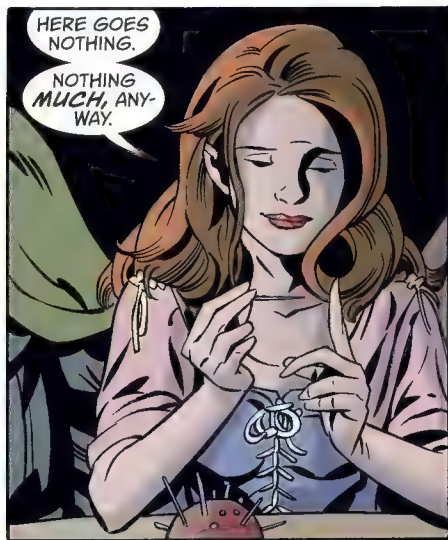


SHOULD SOMEONE COUNT DOWN WHEN A MINUTE HAS PASSED?

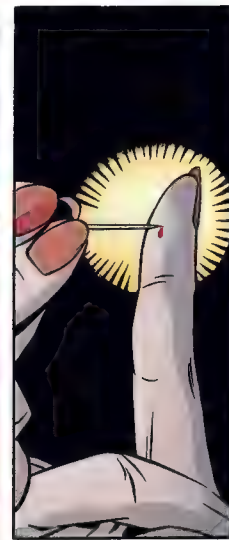
A MINUTE'S GRACE PERIOD WAS SIMPLY TO ALLOW BOY BLUE PLENTY OF TIME TO BE SAFELY AWAY FROM HERE, WHICH I DETECT HE IS.



GO AHEAD AND DO IT NOW, GIRL. IT'S TIME.



HERE GOES NOTHING. NOTHING MUCH, ANYWAY.



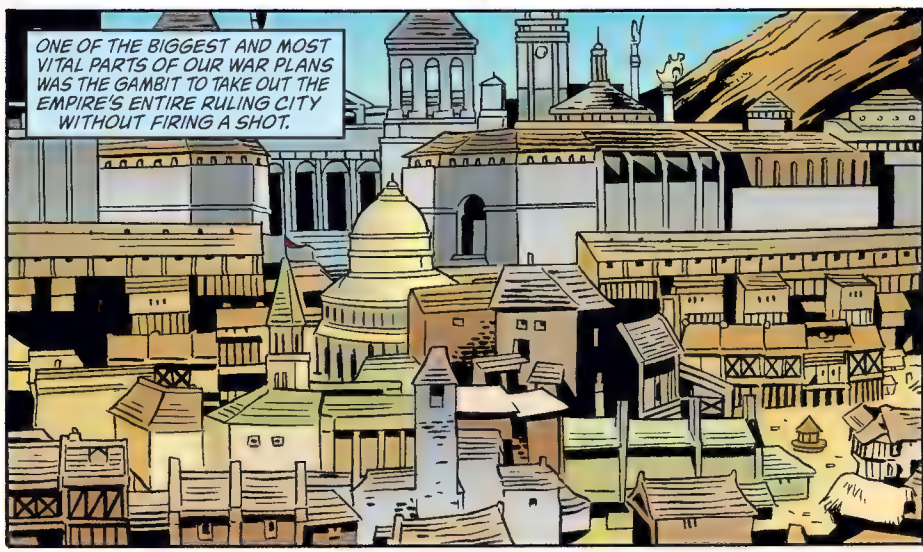
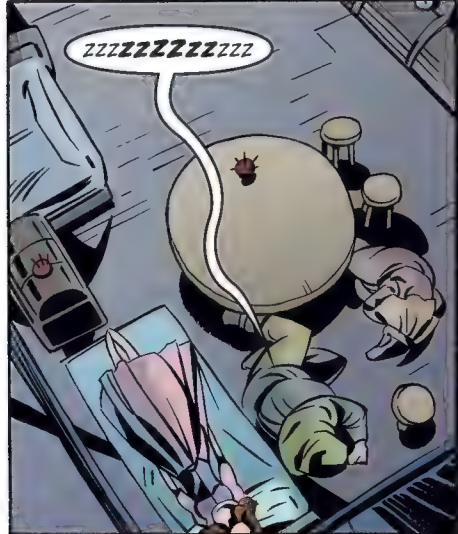
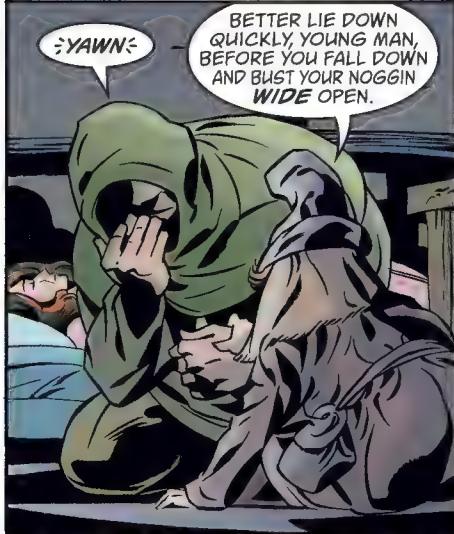
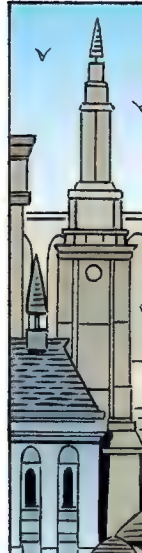
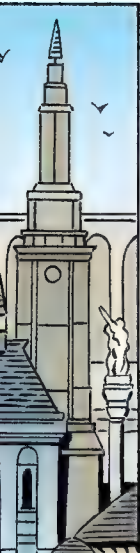
WELL? DID IT WORK?

I DON'T KNOW.

ARE YOU FEELING SLEEPY?

NOPE.

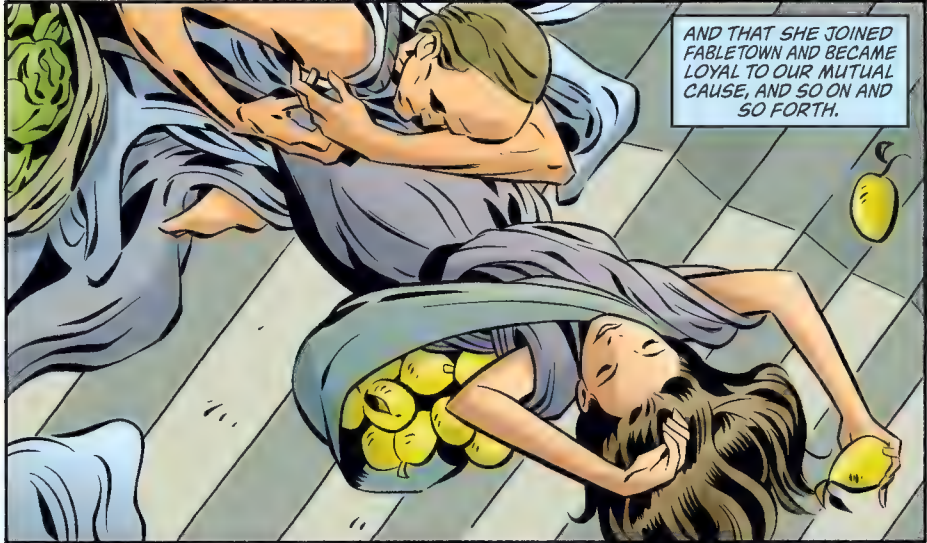




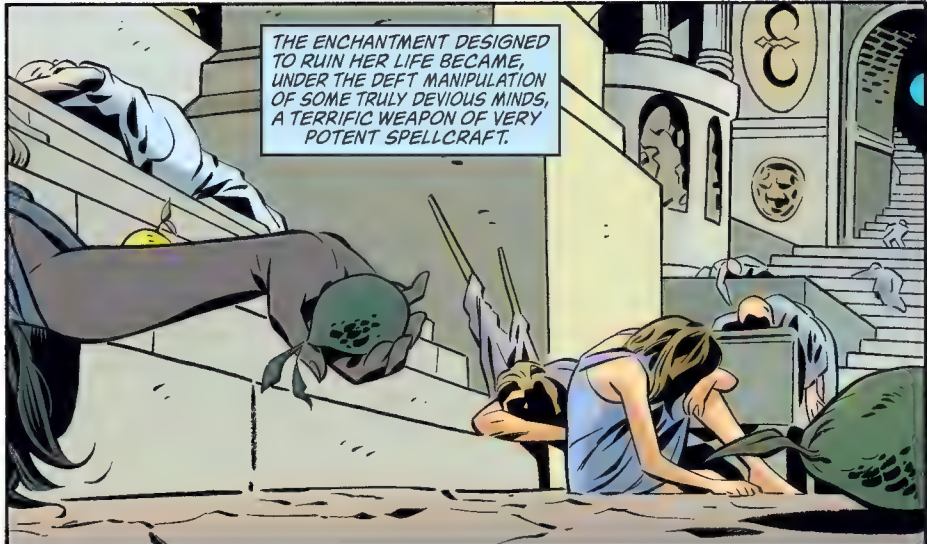
ONE TINY DROP  
OF BRIAR ROSE'S  
BLOOD WAS ALL  
IT TOOK.




THANK GOD, OR ALLAH, OR THE  
GREAT SPIRITS, OR WHOEVER'S  
REALLY RUNNING THINGS, THAT  
THE LEGENDARY SLEEPING  
BEAUTY MADE IT OUT OF THE  
HOMELANDS ALIVE.



AND THAT SHE JOINED  
FABLETOWN AND BECAME  
LOYAL TO OUR MUTUAL  
CAUSE, AND SO ON AND  
SO FORTH.



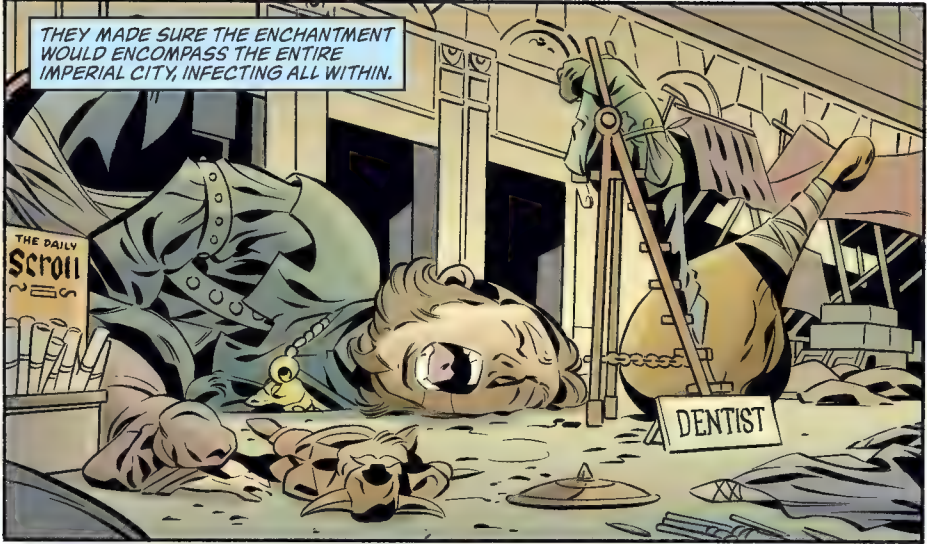
THE ENCHANTMENT DESIGNED  
TO RUIN HER LIFE BECAME,  
UNDER THE DEFT MANIPULATION  
OF SOME TRULY DEVIUS MINDS,  
A TERRIFIC WEAPON OF VERY  
POTENT SPELLCRAFT.



AND OF COURSE THE SORCERERS AND WITCHES ON THE WOODLAND'S MYSTERIOUS THIRTEENTH FLOOR HELPED MAKE SURE THIS TRICK WOULD WORK.




TOGETHER, OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, THEY EXAMINED BRIAR ROSE'S CURSE IN DETAIL, ALMOST TAKING IT APART AND PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.



THEY MADE SURE THE ENCHANTMENT WOULD ENCOMPASS THE ENTIRE IMPERIAL CITY, INFECTING ALL WITHIN.

THE DAILY SCROLL

DENTIST



APPARENTLY FRAU TOTENKINDER WAS THE MOST PROFICIENT AT REWORKING THE SPELL TO MAKE SURE IT WOULD DO EVERYTHING WE ASKED OF IT--ALMOST AS IF SHE'D DESIGNED IT HERSELF.



AND AT THE EMPEROR'S PALACE...

LUMI! WHAT'S WRONG?

ARE YOU ILL?

GUARDS!  
SUMMON THE MEDICAL  
SORCERER!

THE SNOW  
QUEEN HAS BEEN  
STRICKEN!



WHILE THE IMPERIAL CITY WAS FALLING ASLEEP, A REINFORCED ENEMY PATROL HAD MADE CONTACT WITH FORT BRAVO, BIGBY'S COMMANDO COMPANY GUARDING OUR DOOR HOME.



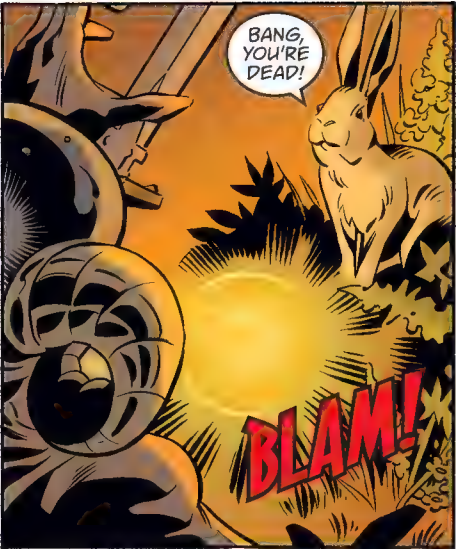
THERE HAD BEEN A FEW SKIRMISHES IN THE WOODS, ALL GOING OUR WAY SO FAR.

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED, BOYS.

THESE WOODS STINK OF ENEMY TROOPS, JUST WAITING TO FILL OUR STEWPOT.



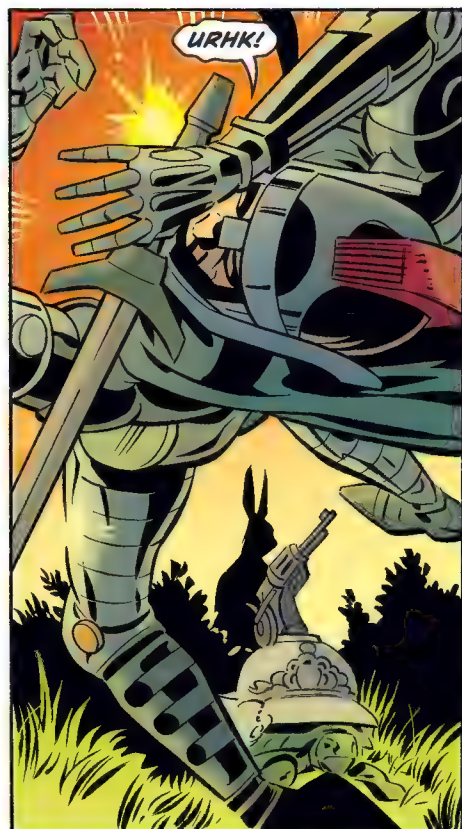
BOO.

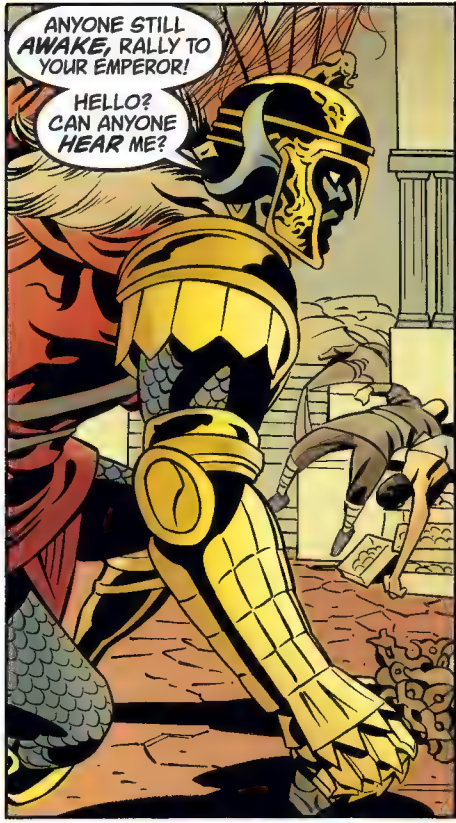


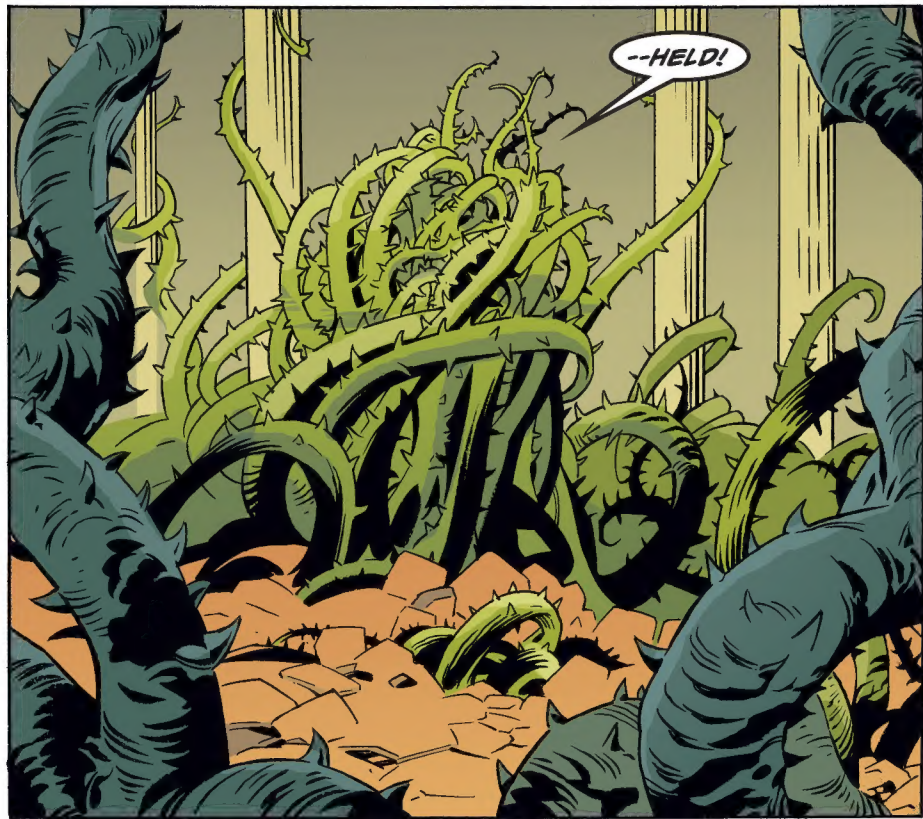
BANG, YOU'RE DEAD!

**BLAM!**









AFTER THE CITY FELL INTO SLUMBER THE THORNS CAME, TRAPPING ALL WITHIN AND KEEPING OUTSIDERS OUT MORE RELIABLY THAN THE THICKEST STONE WALLS.

LATER WE LEARNED THAT WE'D CAPTURED MOST OF THE IMPERIAL ELITE IN THE CITY, INCLUDING THE EMPEROR, THE SNOW QUEEN, ANOTHER THIRTY OF THEIR WORLD GOVERNORS, AND MOST OF THEIR SORCERERS.



BY ANY MEASURE IT WAS A GREAT DAY. NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR THE HORRORS OF THE NEXT DAY THOUGH.



NEXT: THE NEXT DAY

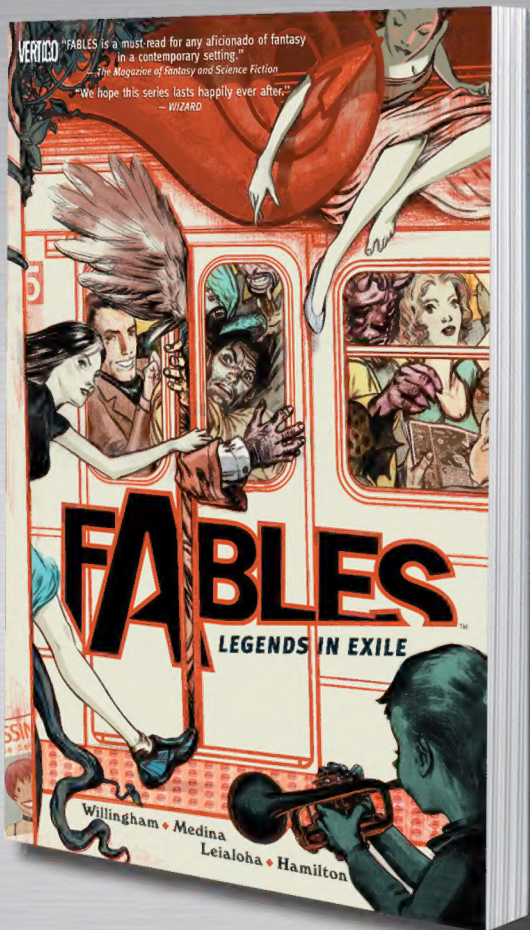
*"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty."* – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

# BILL WILLINGHAM

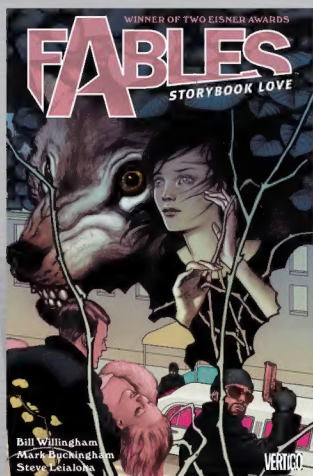
*"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."*  
– THE WASHINGTON POST



- VOL. 1: LEGENDS IN EXILE
- VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM
- VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE
- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



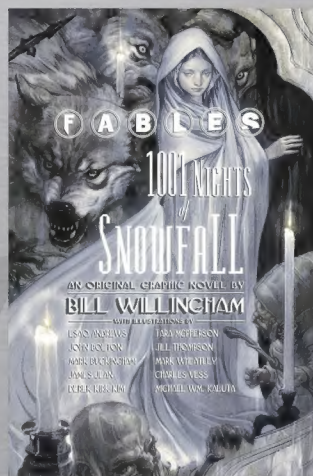
FABLES VOL. 3:  
STORYBOOK LOVE



FABLES VOL. 6:  
HOMELANDS



FABLES:  
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



Use the **BUY IN PRINT** feature to find a comics shop near you.  
Check back here every week for **NEW DIGITAL RELEASES!**

Suggested for Mature Readers



NATHAN